Making levy on Rice Optional

5878. SHRI SURESH KALMADI: Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Central Government have recently suggested to the State Governments to make levy on rice optional for traders and millers; and

(b) if so, what has been the response from the State Governments?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD (SHRI AJIT SINGH): (a) and (b) The State Governments of Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh were requested in March 1995 to make levy on rice optional for the rice millers traders for the rest of the current Kharif Season, if the State Governments so desire. So far none of these State Governments have taken a decision on the subject.

Wrong figures of sugar production leading to import of sugar

5879. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state:

(a) whether the import of sugar is done on the basis of sugar production figures given by his Ministry;

(b) whether the Ministry of Food has given wrong figures of sugar production resulting in heavy import of sugar;

(c) if so, who is responsible for such acts; and

(d) the further action Government propose to take in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD (SHRI AJIT SINGH): (a) to (d) The import of sugar is done taking into account the carryover stocks at the beginning of the season, estimated production, requirement of sugar for domestic consumption, etc. The estimates of sugar production are formulated on season to season basis keeping in view the inputs received from sugar factories, estimates given by the apex bodies of the Sugar Industry, estimates provided by the State Governments, estimated area and sugar cane production formulated by the Ministry of Agriculture, etc. Further for the sugar season 1994-95 (October to September) an Inter-Ministerial Group consisting of representatives from the Ministry of Civil Supplies, Consumer Affairs and Public Distribution, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Food was constituted to make an estimate of sugar production for the current season.

Further, the Ministry of Food has taken up with specialised agencies to develop an appropriate & reliable scientific forecasting model for both the production & demand of sugar.

The sugar production during 1993-94 season declined to 98.12 lakh tonnes from the level of 134.11 lakh tonnes during 1991-92 season and 106.09 lakh tonnes during 1992-93 season. The decline in production during 1993-94 season was due to fall in cane/sugar production in the major sugar producing state of Maharashtra and higher diversion of cane to gur and khandsari sectors.

Non procurement of Rabi crops by Government Agencies in Punjab due to lack of storage

5880. MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE: Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the purchase of Rabi Crops in Punjab by Government agencies has not yet taken off mainly for the want of storage facilities;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what action Government propose to take in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD (SHRI AJIT SINGH): (a) to (c) No, Sir. Against the market arrival of 49.88 lakh tonnes of wheat in Punjab, 49.52 lakh tonnes of wheat has been procured upto 10.5.1995 in the current Rabi Marketing